

Hide 'N Seek by pendragonfics

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Cutesy, F/M, Family Fluff, Female Reader, Hide and Seek, Jim "Chief" Hopper Adopts Eleven, POV Third Person, Protective Parent Jim "Chief" Hopper

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Mrs. Sinclair (Stranger Things), Nancy Wheeler, Reader, Will Byers

Relationships: Jim "Chief" Hopper/Reader, Jim "Chief" Hopper/You

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Summary:

Jim Hopper comes home from a long day at work to find Elle's friends playing in his house.

Hide 'N Seek

Author's Note:

I wrote this on a whim but also, because it's 34°C here today (93°F) and it's too hot to do anything but sit in front of the fan and write fan fic.

Usually, the first thing that Jim Hopper did when he came home was try and find his girls. Ever since he adopted Jane – or, by the insistence of her and her little friends, Elle – he'd found it sort of hard to get through the work week, what, being a single Dad; it was never an easy feat, and something he'd never had to do before. That was why he loved his then-girlfriend, now fiancé _____ so much, for taking him and Elle on; they were a packaged deal, and _____ understood that. But today, when Jim hopped out of his police car, he noticed something was different. The kid's bikes were outside the cabin, but unlike any other time it was D&D night, there was no whooping and playing around, no trace of the kids around.

If the last two years hadn't happened, he would think nothing of it. But since the whole trauma of saving poor Will Buyers from the Upside Down, taking in Elle, working through the aftermath of it all without exposing the truth, he was on edge still, and his first instinct was to reach for his gun.

"Ugh, man! I thought this place was foolproof!" Dustin Henderson whined, his new teeth improving his diction. "Who even looks up?"

Jim sees Dustin, sitting in the lower branches of a tree by his home, and his friend Mike, staring up at him. "I do, mouth breather," he protests. "Anyways, you're out. We've still got to find Will, Elle, and _____ –," he stops, seeing him.

Dustin jumps down from the branch, waving, "Hey, Chief Hopper! What's up?"

His hand relaxes at his side, perching atop his hips to consider the two boys. "What're you doing out here, boys? Isn't it game night?"

Mike nods, hands thrust deep in his pockets. "We're waiting on Lucas and Max." He says, kicking a stone, "and _____ said we could play Hide and Seek while we waited for 'em."

"Could you help us win?" Dustin blurts out, grinning at Jim.

Mike elbows his friend. "I don't need help to win. And who asked you to help me? I'll find Elle and Will in no time by myself." He glares, going off around the backside of the house.

Jim pats Dustin on the back, and says, "Don't mind him, he's just mad we'd find everyone in an instant."

Dustin beams at him. "That's right!" He chirps, "I'm going inside to grab a soda, want to come with?"

"Sure do, kiddo. I live here," He says.

When Jim enters his house, he notices other differences. There's a container of grape juice sitting on the counter, condensation surrounding the benchtop beneath it. _____'s handbag sits on the tabletop, fallen to one side, the contents spilling from the faux leather insides. As Jim goes to straighten it, he sees a small polaroid photograph fall out. His fingers fumble trying to pick it up, and peering at the black and white ink, he makes out two figures. It must have been taken a couple of months ago, at the Wheeler's house – ever since Nancy got into photography, he keeps finding traces of it all over Hawkins. But the picture was taken at the Wheeler's mailbox; Elle's wearing a Princess Leia costume. Beside Elle, stands _____, grinning.

Jim's heart jumps a little, seeing his girls so happy.

"____? Babe?" He calls out, tucking the photo back into the handbag, and turning to the peg beside the door, hung up his hat. "I'm home."

Three months ago, Jim had his girls with him in his car. Any other time, it would be because he was taking _____ to work, Elle to school. But today, he was being a proper Dad; dropping Elle off to the Wheeler's house. Ever

since the family bought a VHS player for their technicolour television set, the group of kids were setting up movie nights every so often, and dressing up for them. He thought it was a little weird, but _____ thought it was the cutest thing ever, often telling him that she wished her childhood friends were more into this stuff than boys and Elvis Presley.

“So, you’ve got your snacks with you in your backpack?” _____ asked Elle, leaning over to the backseat. “And a jacket, if it gets cold?” She quizzed.

Jim rolled his eyes. “It’s not a big deal if you don’t have either, Ellie,” he glanced in the rear-view mirror to his adopted daughter. “We’ll come pick you up at ten o’clock, that sound reasonable?” Elle beamed, nodding so fervently, her headband of faux cinnamon bun hair slipped over her eyes.

“Hold up,” _____ said, pushing it back into place, “Okay, now you’re set...remember, be good for the Wheelers!”

“Chief Hopper! Nurse _____!” Nancy Wheeler, Mike’s older sister called out. She was wearing a pair of slacks, a white button down and a dark vest, hair tied up. Jim had no idea who she was supposed to be. “Jonathan gave me a polaroid for Christmas, can I take a snap of you before you go?”

Jim hesitated, and in that moment, _____ siezed the moment, and jumping out the passenger side of the police car, beckoned for Elle to follow. “Looks like a really neat camera, Nance! Jonathan must really like you!” you had said, standing near their letterbox. “C’mon Elle! Let’s get our picture taken!”

He doesn’t pay attention to what’s happening, really, because as soon as the camera’s flash goes off, _____ has the sheet of developing film in her hands, and Elle’s going inside the house with Nancy.

“So, where to now?” He asked.

_____ shrugged, eyeing him in a coy way, “We’ve got until ten o’clock; how about you, me...and that bottle of chardonnay?”

Jim gunned the engine back on home.

His ears perk up, hearing giggling. It's a soft sound, something he hears when he's between the sheets of his bed with the one he loves, and slowly, a smile curves over his lips, hiding behind his facial hair. It's coming from the bathroom, he's sure, and trying not to be obtrusive, Jim walks toward there, closing the door behind him.

From underneath the curtain across the shower, he sees two bare feet, the toes wiggling impatiently. Jim's smirk touches his eyes, crinkling the skin around them, and slowly, he parts the shower curtain to reveal his love.

"Jim!" She hisses, upset, "What are you doing, they're going to find me now!"

He raises his eyebrows. "Can't I say hi to my hot fiancé and bump?" He glances down to her midsection, where now, there's a small curving area under her flannel shirt.

She makes a noise. "Yeah, you can, but...I wanted to win so bad," she says, eyes sad, "I never got to play these sorts of games when I was a kid!" her words pull at Jim's heartstrings.

Nodding in agreement, he kisses her forehead, and draws the shower curtain back across her. But before he can flush the toilet and leave the bathroom, though, the door is sent open with a *crash!* and the faces of Dustin, Will, and Mike peer inside.

"Boys –," Jim puts his hands upon hips, unamused. He'll need to patch up that dent with drywall.

"Sorry Chief Hopper!" Will winced.

Dustin pointed to the ankle-length gap beneath the shower curtain. "She's in there! _____, I can see your pink toenails!" Dustin exclaims. "See, Mike, you definitely needed me on your team!"

Mike nods. "C'mon, _____, we found you! Come out!"

_____ comes out, grinning wildly. "How did you kids find me? I thought I had the best hiding spot in all of Hawkins!" She laughs, going over to the kids, her arms wrap around all of them as she gets to her knees, giving them a great big hug.

"I saw the Chief go in there," Dustin says. "He was longer than I am for a whizz, and –,"

Will jerks out of the hug. "Ew, Dustin!"

Jim can't help but chuckle at what's going on before him. _____'s a natural-born mother, interacting with the kids like she's just like one of them. She laughs off Dustin's remark, and straightening, she says, "So, you guys have found everyone? How long will Lucas and Max be?"

Mike shakes his head. "I still haven't found Elle."

Dustin holds up his walkie-talkie. "Lucas said he's two minutes away. His mom's driving them over today."

Outside, there's a strange noise. _____ faces Jim, and the kids do the same.

Taking this as his cue, Jim moves past the kids, and hand twitching near his side where his gun is, he exits through the front door, apprehensive. It's not that he's unafraid, he's afraid, but he's ready. Ready to take on whatever it is that spooked the kids, and his fiancé. It's probably a stray squirrel, or a raccoon, or some neighbourhood kid punking him, throwing rocks at his porch.

But when Jim gets outside, and stands beside his car, he sees none of those things. It's just the outside of the cabin, no change to it since he came in when he got home. He sees the group of kids crowding behind the door and beckons them outside.

"I can't see anything," he says, confused.

Just as he hears Mrs. Sinclair's car pulling up beside his, he sees something from the corner of his eye, and suddenly, it all makes sense. The eerie feeling as he came inside. The sound he heard and couldn't see the source of. Sitting atop the roof of the porch, legs dangling with miss-matched socks in her sneakers, sits Elle.

"Young lady, what do you think you're doing?" He crosses his arms.

"Hide and seek." She replies.

_____ exits the house, joining his side to see what the fuss is. But instead of being mad, Jim sees that his fiancé is laughing once more, seeing her daughter sitting on the roof. The kids stream out, coming to see what's happening, and join in with _____. As Mrs. Sinclair exits her car, she sees Elle upon the roof, and raises a hand over her mouth.

"My goodness," she says. "What is she –,"

Jim's had more than enough practice and training for raising a psionic child, and soon enough, he's gotten his little thirteen-year-old to climb down from the roof, thanked Mrs. Sinclair for bringing the kids over, and gotten them inside to start their little game. By the time that's all done, Jim sits back in his chair, tired. It's been a long day, anyway, what, with him being the police chief, and by eleven o'clock that night, when all the kids are off home with their parents, Elle is tucked in bed with kisses from both her parents, and _____ changing into her pyjamas, he's exhausted.

"TV, and then bed?" He proposes to his fiancé.

"How about a foot rub, and bed?" She counteroffers. "My eyes are so tired they're going to fall out."

He smiles to himself at that and agrees. "C'mon, babe, let's get to bed."

Author's Note:

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